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SUBJECT: SUDAN: National Demining Authority Opens

Summary

¶1. (U) Sudan's Mine Action Authority opened with some fanfare in Khartoum on March 7. President Bashir, First VP Kiir, Defense Minister Hussein, and Humanitarian Affairs Minister Manibe all spoke to the crowd of 250 invited guests. The MNAA will oversee demining and ordnance disposal operations in both northern and southern Sudan; it is a joint GNU-UNDP program. End Summary.

Structure

¶2. (U) The Government of Sudan in conjunction with the United Nations Development Program, established the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) in Khartoum on March 7. The NMAA is composed of the following four components:

- a. National Mine Action Committee (NMAC)
- b. General Secretariat of the NMAC
- c. National Mine Action Center (Based in Khartoum)
- d. Regional Mine Action Center in Southern Sudan (Based in Juba).

¶3. (U) The NMAC is co-chaired by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and the Minister of Defense, with the State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs designated as the Secretary General of the NMAC. The NMAC is composed of

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representatives from 13 ministries of the Government of National Unity (GONU), two representatives from the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), and one representative from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

High Level Interest

¶4. (SBU) President Bashir attended the opening session along with Minister of Defense 1st Lieutenant General Hussein and Minister of Humanitarian Affairs Manibe. All the speakers welcomed the establishment of the NMAA and termed its establishment a milestone in the implementation of the CPA. Representing SRSG Pronk, Dr Francis Kai Kai highlighted the need for demining Sudan to be a Sudanese process. President Bashir, appearing bareheaded in a safari suit, highlighted the importance of the establishment of the NMAA as "one of the first fruits of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)," and as a strong indicator of the commitment and

determination of the Republic of the Sudan to address the landmine contamination problem. Bashir also said the GNU has included mine action in its national budget for 2006 and will allocate funds for mine action in the coming years. First VP Salva Kiir spoke at the closing ceremony, thanking the UN, the donor community, and all other organizations/institutions that have assisted and supported the Sudanese authorities and people in addressing the landmine contamination problem in the Sudan. Kiir made a strong appeal to all the UN agencies, the donor community and all other national and international bodies, to work closely with NMAA to build Sudanese management and operations capacities. In addition, he appealed to the donor community to allocate special funds for building of local and national mine action capacities.

Working Session

15. (U) Attendees were treated to presentations by the representatives of the NMAC, as well as key UN mine action agencies, including UNMAS, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, and UNHCR. Briefings focused on the magnitude of the landmine contamination in Sudan, achievements to date, on going activities/projects, funding situation, the challenges faced, and their future plans. In addition, the Commissioner General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) presented highlights of the government vision and plans for addressing the landmine contamination problems in the country and priority areas for assistance. The presentations were followed by a one-hour session of open discussions and interventions from various ministries, national and international organizations, UN agencies, and individuals.

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